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# An Egyptian Scarabæus

or "A Legend of the Nile"



By  
Salim H. Bikhazi  
and  
Herbert Clark







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OR

“A Legend of the Nile”

BY

SALIM Y. ALKAZIN

AND

ADELBERT CLARK



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## The Egyptian Scarabaeus.

THE first word that forces its way through a visitor's mouth standing in front of an Egyptian ruin, no matter how small or insignificant it might be, is the word "Grand," and then follows "Magnificent." But it is not this feeling that roots your feet to the spot, and wide opens your eyes and fixes your sight, as if attracted by an overwhelming magnetic power, and soars up with your senses to an unknown world. There is something mysterious around the ruins. Probably the spirits of those wise and knowing priests that still hover around the ruins murmuring dirges or the mystic precepts of the old doctrines.

Thus it is with the small scarabaeus that marks the seal of this book, and which is mentioned in the leading poem. This scarabaeus was found by a wandering Arab during the Spring of 1902. In the heart of a poor and lonely tomb on an unknown spot of the south-eastern border of the Lybian desert.

The scarab or scarabaeus, is a tropical dung-beetle found particularly in Egypt. The old Egyptians regarded it as a symbol of the god Kheper and as an emblem of the revivication of the body and the immortality of the soul.

The funeral scarabs were put on the fingers or heart of the dead, and, in the latter case they were covered with powerful names and magical emblems, thought to be a protection to the dead. Historical scarabs are those that contain some historical text or data. Ornamental scarabs were adopted by the living and on them were inscribed the name of the reigning-king or some national hero, and they were used as seals or set in rings.

As the influence of Egypt extended to the East, the Phœnicians borrowed the design and used it. Afterwards, it was used by the Greeks and others.

SALIM Y. ALKAZIN.





— اَغْنِيَنِى الْبَيْتُ —

١. دَفَنَ الْمَاءُ فِي رِمَالِي دُمُوزَا  
وَمَتَّ عَنْهَا فَأَتَرَجَّيْنِ سِتْرَا
٢. لَيْتَنِي أَجْرِي كَالْمِدَادِ عَلَى الطَّرْسِ  
فَارْفُؤِي لِي سِرَارِي سِرَا فِسْرَا
٣. أَنَا مُضْرُوفٌ فِيهَا وَغَنَاهَا  
وَعَلَى غِنَاهَا جَائِي أَسْتَقْرَا
٤. وَلَكِنْ أَسْتَسِيئُ أَبْلَعْتُ لَفِيفِي  
كُنْتُ فِيهَا يَا مَضْرُوفِي أَجْرِي
٥. أَنْ يَكُنْ زَا الْعِظَمِ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ  
تَبْدِي فَيَجْعَلُ الْخَلْدُ خَبْرَا
٦. فَيَعَادِي لِي فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ  
لَدَيْ الْخَلْدِ أَنْ يَكُنْ زَا

## A Song of the Nile.

---

My waters have buried within your sands, O fair Egypt, secrets which you have been slow at discovering. Had it been given me to flow like ink on paper, I would disclose them to you one after the other.

I am Egypt! I reflect its riches, its age, its mystery, its doctrine and the beauty of its maidens, and the might and wisdom of its men. I am great Osiris. I am fair Isis.

Yes! and many an Isis (given as an offering for a heavy flood) did my arms fold to my breast of whom you were more worthy.

If the daily reappearance of the great Ra is not a satisfactory proof of the immortality of the soul and the revivification of the body, then my annual visit must be an undoubted proof.

S. Y. ALKAZIN.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE:—Space would not permit the translation of the song in verse form, so I have endeavored to write it in prose and still retain its musical theme.

## An Egyptian Scarabæus or "A Legend of the Nile"

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Last night I woke from out a dream  
For I had wandered far  
Into a strange and ancient land,  
Led by a silver star.  
I dreamt I stood on Soudan's soil,  
High, on a mountain crest;  
A dusky maid with silken curls  
Was leaning on my breast.

"Where yonder river wends its way  
Through fertile fields below,  
A desert stretched its leafless plain,  
Three thousand years ago.  
No trace of beauty graced the earth  
Save in the Pharaoh's pride;  
He built rich palaces and tombs  
His honored crimes to hide.

"Green vines and cypress trees grew near  
Within the garden close,  
And rarest lilies rich and sweet  
Were blooming with the rose.  
Within the carven corridors  
Where musk perfumed the air,  
Fair statuary graced the walls,  
With hangings rich and rare.

"Twelve mistresses had walked its halls  
And shared the Pharaoh's bed;  
Twelve mistresses were cast aside  
And numbered with the dead.  
One day a priest of Osiris  
Had gained the palace walls;  
I met him in a frightened mood  
Half-crouching in the halls.

"He caught my arm, 'Queen Semuta,  
'Tis time for thee to fly,  
For Pharaoh brings another bride,  
And thou art doomed to die.  
Hark! thou canst hear the marriage-guests  
Already on the stair.'  
He caught my fainting form and cried,  
'There is no time for pray'r!'

“Down through a secret way we went  
To 'void the mocking throng;  
Yet in my half-unconscious state  
I heard the Pharaoh's song.  
I paused within the arbor's shade  
And brushed aside a tear.  
The good priest fanned my aching brow  
And tried to soothe my fear.

“The roses hinted as we passed  
With their delicious breath,  
The utter loneliness before;  
The gloomy wings of Death.  
I thought of loved-ones far away  
Beyond the barren plain;  
I thought of him, of whom I loved,  
But ne'er could see again.

“'Dear child, Osiris will not leave  
You to a cruel fate,  
But he will lead your feeble feet  
Close to the open Gate.  
An alternative waits for thee  
But it is cast in gloom.  
One, is the desert for escape,  
The other is the tomb.'

“And so I chose the desert plain  
And journeyed long and far;  
My guide by day—the rising sun;  
By night—the evening star.  
But thirst and hunger brought me low,  
Though hunger was the least,  
For in my wild deliriums  
I dreamt of many a feast.

“I saw rich gardens sweet with flow'rs,  
And vainly did I call;  
I heard the babbling of a brook,  
I saw the fountain's fall.  
And even in my dreams I plead,  
'Osiris hear my cry;  
One goblet of that sparkling rill;  
Just one, before I die!'

“But mercy was not meant for me,  
And so my life swept on,  
Into a fairer, brighter realm—  
In Paradise 'twas born.  
But from my bed, a river sprang  
And laughing danced along,  
With snowy ripples on its breast;  
Its shallows full of song.

“It grew and grew, a mighty stream  
Beneath the azure skies,  
And in this ancient land, it proved  
A blessing in disguise.  
This scarabaeus you wore, dear friend,  
Was placed upon my breast,  
And shows Osiris can give  
The weary, peace and rest.

“It shows a bit of history  
Of a once noble race,  
But like a ‘brand’ it marks the shame  
Upon its Pharaoh’s face.  
And could your eye decipher it,  
(Though 'tis not worth the while),  
You’d find half-hidden in the clay,  
This legend of the Nile.”



## Ois, the Pearl.

---

Once, 'twas said that Cleopatra  
Had a rival fair as she,  
Dwelling in a rose-wreathed palace  
Close beside the surging sea.  
Never had the dainty seashells  
Strewn upon Egyptian shore,  
Or the Pharaoh's fragrant lotus  
Such a marvelous beauty bore.

From the sea, rare pearls were given,  
(Treasures from deep mines afar,)  
And they gleamed upon her bosom  
Like the twinkling of a star.  
Sweet rose-blossoms, stately lilies,  
Opened for her by the way;  
Princely lovers, sons of Egypt,  
Sought to woo her night and day.

But a magic pow'r enchanted  
Held her in a drowsy spell.  
While the sea's white foaming billows  
Seemed to sound her funeral knell.  
All day long a voice was calling,  
"Ois, come and 'bide with me;  
Thou shall be the queen of Pearlland;  
Thou shall rule the mighty sea!

"There's a city built of coral;  
Pearl shall be thy judgment throne,  
And the submarines shall worship,  
And shall serve but thee alone.  
Nevermore shall pain or sorrow  
Touch thee with its frightful wing.  
Wilt thou fill my heart with glory?"  
Said the strange but handsome king.

"No!" cried Ois, stepping backward,  
Lest the waves her form embrace,  
"Thou mayst be the king of Pearlland,  
But a mask is on thy face!  
Mine, shall be the throne of Egypt!  
Mine, shall be a Pharaoh's love!  
Mine, shall be a star of beauty,  
Like the stars that shine above!"

Once again the hand of magic  
    Wove its fine and subtle spell;  
Once again, the seething billows  
    Rang more loud her funeral knell,  
While a hand and voice persuading  
    Caught and bound Love's snowy wings,  
So once more the maid was captured  
    By the bright and dazzling things.

"Foolish child," said Cleopatra,  
    "Why not wear his signet ring?  
He, the ruler of the ocean;  
    He, the young and handsome king!  
He would give thee priceless jewels;  
    Countless strings of milky pearls;  
He would deck thee with their beauty;  
    'They would don thy silken curls."

Charmed and dazed with all the splendor,  
    Woven by a king and queen,  
Ois did not see the serpent  
    Just before her, dark and green.  
Fearlessly with Love she ventured  
    To the angry wave's embrace;  
Only once, she paused a moment,  
    As the salt spray touched her face.

But 'twas said when Cleopatra  
    Gazed upon the spotless bier,  
At the waxen lily, Ois,  
    In her eyes there gleamed a tear.  
And 'twas said that half her beauty  
    Melted as she stood that hour,  
Gazing at the broken lily,  
    That was once a perfect flower.

## A Legend of the Blue Lotus.

---

One morning as the sunbeams kissed  
The sands on Pharaoh's shore,  
The pale blue lotus blossomed forth  
As in the days of yore.  
Sweet strains of music filled my ears  
As if from worlds afar,  
Beyond the glory of the sun;  
Beyond the evening star.

It might have been I dreamt it all;  
But lo! I saw her there  
In clinging robes of pale blue gauze;  
A form divinely fair.  
Her slender arms and shoulders bare  
Were like the lotus sweet;  
And like rare jewels of the past,  
Her tiny sandaled feet.

A wealth of midnight silken curls  
Caressed her dusky cheek;  
Her lips were like a budding rose  
That wild-bees love to seek.  
But when again I looked to see  
The lovely spirit there,  
I only saw upon the tide,  
A lotus pure and fair.

When morning dawned again, I called  
My young guide to my side,  
And pointed to the shadowy form  
Out on the sluggish tide.  
He fell upon the sand and cried,  
“’Tis Ulmana, the queen.  
She lives within the lotus-buds.  
Among the rushes green.

“Two thousand years ago,” he said,  
“They laid her down to rest;  
One spotless flow’r white as snow  
Was lain upon her breast.  
They placed her in a granite tomb,  
Where sweet and soft and low,  
The river floweth to the sea—  
Two thousand years ago.



“Since then, the river changed its course  
Until it swept away,  
The costly sepulcher of stone,  
Just at the dawn of day.  
But from the spot a lotus sprang  
In palest shades of blue.  
And in its depths of loveliness,  
The queen was born anew.”

And still when morning lifts its veil  
O'er Pharaoh's shining shore,  
And lotus blossoms rich and rare  
Spreads beauty all aglore,  
The spirit of the Pharaoh's bride  
Is ever lingering there;  
She wears a star upon her breast,  
A lotus in her hair.

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### Queen Ulmana's Turquoise.

---

Like a bit of the glory of heaven,  
Or a leaf of the violet's blue  
When the morning has lent her bright jewels,  
Of the purest crystalline dew,  
Is the beautiful breastplate of turquoise  
That was worn by Ulmana, the queen,  
As she rood through the streets of the city  
In her chariot of gold and green.

Long ago in the dust of the ages.  
The queen to her fair “god” went  
In a chariot of pearl and white lilies,  
When the reign of her earth-life was spent.  
But still, in a palace at Cairo,  
Her turquoise reflects back the sky,  
And with these and the marks of her scarabaeus,  
Her greatness will never die!

## A Story of the Sphinx.

Last night I gazed on the dusky Sphinx  
And the Pyramids tow'ring high ;  
I heard the song of the nightingale,  
And the night-winds mournful sigh.  
The crescent moon through the dusky haze  
Was a scarlet bow of fire,  
And I strolled out from my snowy tent,  
As it mounted high'r and high'r.

But soon it changed to a somber gold  
And spread forth a veil of light,  
But the Sphinx spread out a jet-black veil,  
Black as the darkest night.  
Then soon, as if, by some magic spell,  
The nightingale hushed its song,  
And at the foot of the ancient "god"  
I saw a gathering throng.

Sweet strains of music—perfume of flow'rs  
Were borne on the wings of night,  
And led me into a blackest shade,  
And filled me with strange delight.  
I saw the pride and pomp of years ;  
Rich gems and rare cloths of gold ;  
And sweetest flowers the land could yield  
Were brought and strewn fold on fold.

A handsome queen on a marble throne  
Was seated, and quite at ease.  
She wore a crown of coral and pearls  
That came from the distant seas.  
Her snowy gown was of rarest silk  
And was held by milky pearls,  
And o'er her brow was a brilliant star,  
Agleam, in her raven curls.

I stood apart from the mighty throng,  
That ever seemed to be  
Surging about for a better view,  
Like waves of the briny sea.  
I was charmed by the volts of splendor  
From the things I'd seen and heard,  
'Till my heart was filled with raptured bliss  
And gay as the fleetest bird.

But ah, alas! for the scene soon changed;  
The musical theme grew still.  
The queen arose from the judgment-seat  
With a cold and irony will.  
“Where are the people that dared to bow  
Save at the foot of he?”  
(Pointing up to the great stone face  
Gazing out in majesty.)

Four men arose from the mighty throng,  
And the light in their jet-black eyes,  
Were brighter far, than the silver stars  
That blaze in the vaulted skies.  
“Ye dogs,” she cried with a serpent’s hiss,  
“The asp shall mete out thy Death.”  
She stepped forward to a golden urn,—  
They waited with bated breath.

She quietly raised the golden lid,  
Then horrors, of horror came  
The poisonous reptiles of dark-green hue,  
With eyes of the rubies flame.  
With lightning speed they mounted the steps  
And sprang at the frightened queen,  
And buried their fangs in her snowy breast—  
I trembled to hear her scream.

Cries of horror arose from the throng;  
Women fell and fainted nigh;  
The rumbling of thunder crashed and rolled;  
Lightning flashed through the cloudless sky.  
The queen ’rose in pain and madness, and  
Gaspd for a breath of air;  
She uttered forth a piercing scream, and  
Fell dead on the judgment-stair.

Once more I stood in the golden ray  
Of the crescent moon above;  
Once more I heard the nightingale’s song  
And it seemed to sing of love.  
The song that it seemed to sing that night  
Was the endless song of Love.  
It seemed to ring through the starry space.  
From the heavenly realms above!

And still, when I look at the Pyramids  
As they point up toward the sky,  
And the stone face of the dusky Sphinx,  
My soul would refrain to cry,  
For the world is fair, and God made it  
Out of chaos, mist and gloom,  
And out of it, He created *us*,  
And made every flower to bloom!

---

### The Egyptian Violets.

Not far from the mines where the turquoise  
Are found in the earth below,  
'Mid the mosses that crown the wildwood,  
The fairest violets grow.  
A legend is told by the natives  
Of how in the days gone by,  
A maid left the queen's marble palace,  
In the vale to live or die.

She wore on her bosom a lotus,  
Fresh from the breast of the Nile,  
That seemed to look up to her beauty,  
And say with a gentle smile,  
"Where are you going sweet Seba?"  
But she never answered a word,  
As she journeyed on through the valley.  
As swift as a frightened bird.

She died— and out from her beauty,  
A bed of rich violets grew;  
And deep in the earth beneath her  
The turquoise had found its blue.  
And forever, and ever and ever,  
The violets will cast their bloom,  
To veil from the land of mysteries,  
The darkness of Death and gloom!



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